Uncle Davie's Children

❀

Daulton

❀

The Opening Door Series

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

Class PZ7

Book .D265

Copyright No. Un

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

THE OPENING DOOR SERIES

UNCLE DAVIE'S CHILDREN

The Opening Door Series

EDITED BY

MARY V. WORSTELL

THE LITTLE TAILOR OF THE WINDING WAY. By GERTRUDE CROWNFIELD

POLLY OF THE WISHING RING. By MARGARET JOHNSON

POLLY'S GARDEN. By HELEN W. BANKS

UNCLE DAVIE'S CHILDREN. By AGNES McCLELLAND DAULTON

"And that's for Uncle Davie."

UNCLE DAVIE'S CHILDREN

BY

AGNES McCLELLAND DAULTON

AUTHOR OF "WINGS AND STINGS," "THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BUTTERFLY," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

WILLY POGÁNY

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1920

All rights reserved

PZ7
.D265
Un

Copyright, 1920,
By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published March, 1920.

MAR 31 1920

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

©Cl.A566293

PREFACE

The writer for children knows he has ever to deal with the stern moralist. The evil-doer must be circumvented and virtue must be rewarded if the story is to be accepted as *true to life!* There can be no compromise since the small critic has but one standard: justice tempered mildly with mercy.

Moreover, the writer knows that precedent looms large in the child's story, and that certain moldy, but adored, stage properties are always desirable: such as the lonely orphan, the sudden good fortune, and best beloved, the Wicked Uncle; and knowing these things he can laugh pityingly at the critic who pronounces his plot old. "Old!" Oh, no! Antique, classic, and therefore precious in its very decrepitude, for the true child loathes the new, the original! He would hear the same story again and yet again.

The child wants the tale moral, but without the moral; and if there is such a thing in "Uncle Davie's Children" it surely crept in through the back door. I never intended it to be there. I did, however, I confess, take pleasure in providing an ideal Adopted Uncle to offset the Wicked Uncle — that seemed but fair. If it seems that I have insisted too much upon

love, let me say that I believe that love is to the child exactly what sunlight is to the flower. It is only in the full effulgence of love that the delicate petals of a child's personality are able to unfold until the golden heart lies revealed to a rejoicing world.

There are, perhaps, many kinds of love, but I am thinking of that understanding gentle-heartedness that seeks to develop the child as he is; that has no desire to change the buttercup into the daisy, nor yet the lily into a rose. David Marshall might add tenderness to the smile and set a sparkle in the tear, but he would leave Patty as he found her — an April Girl.

Surely a happy hour in childhood with a beloved story is one of the sweetest memories we carry through life; so if my little tale can but leave upon some mind such an imprint I shall be satisfied; yes, quite satisfied.

UNCLE DAVIE'S CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

Stubbs Home

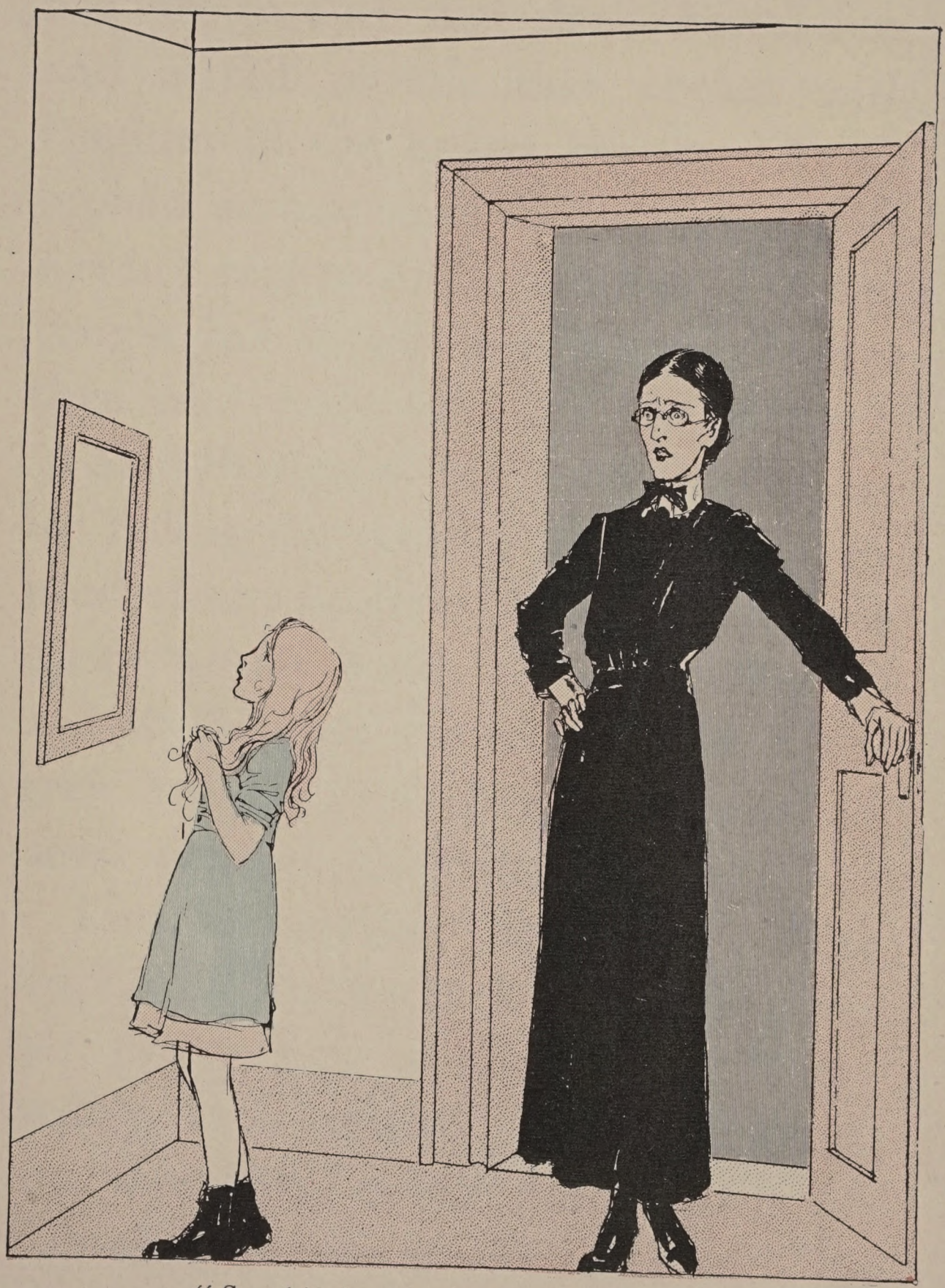
"Oh, goodness me, it just *won't* curl!" complained Patty, standing on tiptoe to take another peep at the lock of red hair she was fiercely brushing around her slim forefinger. "Oh, dear! Miss Pettigrew says folks always take to curls and dimples. I wish they wanted freckles," and Patty turned up her nose at the face she saw peeping out at her from the looking-glass.

It was a freckled little face, but it

had brown eyes that danced with fun, and a red mouth that curled with laughter at the littlest chance. At an orphan asylum chances for being jolly weren't easy to find; but now!—Patty caught her breath and brushed harder than ever at the very thought of it.

Miss Pettigrew was down in the parlor telling the waiting group how they must always be good children, and grow up to be an honor to Stubbs Home, and all the time she talked, Miss Pettigrew had her arm about Lina, and she never once missed Patty.

Lina, smoothing down her white frock, and tossing back her curls under her pretty hat, wondered that Patty hadn't been missed. She wondered, too, that Patty didn't hurry down, for Captain Kenneth might come with his



"So this is what's keeping you!"

'bus any minute now. Just at that moment Miss Pettigrew started to count them!

Miss Pettigrew was tall and thin, and quick on her feet, and it didn't take her long to rush up the stairs and into the big bare dormitory, where Patty, her eyes filled with tears, was staring at herself in the murky mirror.

"Well!" gasped Miss Pettigrew. "So *this* is what's keeping you! I thought I knew all your faults — having had you under my eyes for twelve years — laughing one minute, crying the next; but I never once suspected you of vanity!"

Patty stood silent, but the tears in her eyes suddenly slipped down her cheeks.

"That's it now, — go to sniffling!

I don't suppose it's sorrow at leaving Stubbs Home. If it is, you can spare your tears! You'll be back! But Captain Kenneth always thinks he knows best. We'll see, my beauty! Now, do that hair up in a tight braid — *tight*, do you hear? And get down with the rest!" And Miss Pettigrew went downstairs again, for Captain Kenneth was now at the door with the 'bus.

Patty was glad that Doctor Stubbs was too busy talking to some strange ladies to notice her as she hurried past him.

"These children, ten boys and twelve girls — we have two hundred in the institution — are being taken away to find homes," the doctor was saying. His gray beard wagged on his

chin as he talked, in a way that always made Patty want to laugh — Doctor Stubbs' beard had always been such a comfort to Patty. But she couldn't laugh to-day, she could only keep saying "*Never, never, never!*"

Meanwhile the doctor boomed on: "We get an order for one or two children at a certain place in the country, and instead of sending only two, we send on Captain Kenneth with a little party, for, you see, people catch the fever. Seeing a neighbor adopt a child why shouldn't the next family? The pretty, smart ones are picked up first, of course. See that child with the long brown curls? That's Lina — she'll be snatched up at once, Miss Pettigrew says. Indeed, we hope to place Lina in some home of wealth

—" Then the doctor's eyes fell upon Patty, who had just taken the end seat in the 'bus. Her face grew pale under the doctor's glance. What if he should decide not to send her? "Ahem!" said the doctor, — but just at that instant the driver cracked his whip, and at his cheery "Git-ep!" away rattled the old omnibus.

Captain Kenneth, fat and jolly, looked down the double row of boys and girls and smiled approvingly.

"How far are we going, Captain Ken?" the children fairly bubbled into speech. — "How long will it take?" — And, "Oh, please, do you suppose anybody will want me?" — "Or me?" — And, "Oh, I hope I can live on a farm!" — "I hope my new father will keep a horse!" — "Oh,

I hope my new mama will wear a silk dress every day!" — this last was from Lina. — "Oh, I hope mine will have brown eyes. My own mama did!"

It was enough to deafen one, but Captain Ken only laughed and answered as fast as he could.

They were going to a beautiful little town among the mountains called Clear Spring, he told them. There were good, kind people there — mothers and fathers for little boys and girls who hadn't any; for some of them, surely; for all of them, perhaps, — he hoped so. They would reach Clear Spring next day. Yes, they would go to a real hotel, and have breakfast, and then to a church, where the fathers and mothers would come to choose their children.

At this minute Captain Kenneth signaled the 'bus to stop before a little white house. At the gate stood a boy with a satchel, and beside him a little brown-haired lady with a sweet face. When Captain Ken came up, she put the boy's hand into his, and then she ran up the path and into the house, without once looking back.

Captain Kenneth opened the door of the long 'bus, and the boy got in. His face was white, and his lips were pressed tightly together.

"You shall sit by our Patty," said Captain Kenneth in his jolly way. "I've known her ever since she was a baby. This, Patty, is Jamie Allen, and I've known *him* ever since *he* was a baby." That was all, and then they were off again.

Not one word did Patty say to Jamie, nor Jamie to Patty, and yet, as they stole little glances at each other, neither of them felt quite so desolate.

CHAPTER II

The Choosing

Getting all those boys and girls settled in the train wasn't the easiest thing in the world, yet Captain Kenneth did it, and once again Patty found herself stowed away in a seat with Jamie. Now that everybody was busy talking, they, too, began a conversation — or rather Jamie did, for Patty had been too busy stealing little glances at him to think of talking.

"It was hard to leave my mother!" he said to Patty, as the train began to move. "Mother felt dreadfully to let me go, too, but she has to go to Eng-

land, where my grandmother is very sick, and she couldn't afford to take me. Captain Kenneth knew my father — he died when I was little — so the Captain said he would try to get me a good home, where they would keep me while mother is away."

"And if he can't?" asked Patty eagerly.

"Then he will take me back with him to Stubbs Home to stay till mother comes home."

"Oh, oh!" sighed Patty, "it must be lovely to have a mother!" Then, after a bit, she added, "If *I* ever get one, I — I do hope she'll have big blue eyes and golden hair, and wear a white dress and blue ribbons!"

"Pooh!" said Jamie, but his eyes twinkled, so Patty didn't mind, "pooh,

I should think she'd look like a doll in a shop window. I like my kind best. She's pretty, my mother is —" then Jamie stopped to swallow hard.

Patty, leaning suddenly toward Jamie, whispered:

"Don't you ever tell! I didn't have any mother, ever; nor any father! A man found me on the church steps, a weeny-teeny baby in a basket, and he took me to Stubbs Home. I had on a white dress, and a white silk bag was tied to my wrist, and it had my mother's wedding ring in it, and a note that said my name was Patty and to please take good care of me. Nobody ever wanted me for their little girl, because I had freckles and red hair, and no name but Patty. But I've a last name now. I chose one this

morning. When a mother asks me what my name is I shall say 'Patty Church,' and it isn't any story, for didn't they find me on the church steps? You won't tell, will you, Jamie?"

"No," hesitated Jamie — he had great respect for truth, but he did feel sorry for Patty. "I suppose you could choose a name if you wanted to. But why don't you want to go back to Stubbs Home?"

"Because," whispered back Patty, "I hate Stubbs Home. The minister says it's wicked to hate, but I guess he never was a baby in a basket that grew up to be red-haired and freckled."

"Why, I think your hair is pretty," said Jamie, looking at the thick, soft braid that hung over Patty's shoulder.

"Pretty!" gasped Patty, her eyes round with astonishment.

"Why, yes, and your eyes are a dancy brown. I'll bet my mother would choose you quicker than any girl in this car."

"*I* pretty! — Do — do you think," asked Patty breathlessly, "somebody may take me? Oh, I'd be so good! I wouldn't laugh, and I wouldn't cry —" and then, to Jamie's astonishment, her head went down on her arm, and he saw that she was shaking with sobs.

"Of course someone will take you! Don't you cry!" begged Jamie. "I — I didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

"Hurt my feelings!" cried Patty, looking up all a-sparkle of smiles behind her tears. "Oh, I like you, Jamie

Allen, and I hope you'll get the best home in the whole world!"

But the next day it looked as if neither Jamie nor Patty would have any sort of home offered them. Even Captain Kenneth's heart failed him, as he saw child after child chosen to go happily and proudly away by the side of some new parent, till at last just Jamie and Patty sat alone in a pew in the empty church.

Miss Pettigrew was right. Lina was snatched up instantly by a large lady, with a rustling black silk, and pink roses on her bonnet. If her face was somewhat red and her voice sharp, Lina didn't notice it; she was too delighted with the glitter of the gold chain about her neck; indeed, she almost forgot to say good-by to Patty,

but at the last moment she flew back to say, "Oh, Patty, I hope you'll find a mother, but if you don't, tell Miss Pettigrew I've got a lovely one, and she has two horses to her carriage, and everything!"

But Patty, as she kissed Lina, was saying to herself: "Never, never, never!" more desperately than ever.

All the time the choosing had been going on, a big man had sat in a pew near the door, a man that everybody seemed to like, for each child seemed in some mysterious way to be brought to him before the choice was settled. The one exception was Lina; the large lady consulted no one. The man's eyes followed her somewhat anxiously as she hurried away leading her new little girl by the hand.

Of course everyone wanted handsome Jamie until they learned that he had a mother living and needed a home only for a time — that he was loaned and not given. But no one, after seeing Patty's thin little hands, and her delicate, slender body, and the light in her brown eyes, wanted to undertake her.

"She's too 'pindling to be of much good for work," muttered the woman who had taken Lina. "And that red hair — she's got too much spirit!"

Somehow Jamie did not feel half so sorry for himself as he did for Patty. It seemed to him as if he could hear her heart ache, as she sat there, brave, bright-eyed, watching one after another of the children depart.

As the last foster parent went away

with happy Johnny Cole, the big man in the back pew got up and came to where Jamie and Patty were sitting. He was no older than Captain Ken, with a close-clipped brown beard and kind, gentle eyes, and, it seemed to Patty, the pleasantest voice in the world. "Well, children," he said, "we've had a long wait; but now it's my turn to choose, and I'll take you two, — that is, if you think you'd care to be Uncle Davie's children."

"Oh, we'd — we'd love it!" cried Patty, clasping her hands.

"We'd love it — we'd love it."

CHAPTER III

Home at Last

It was nearly eight o'clock, but in June the sunlight lingers long in Clear Spring Valley. Overlook Mountain stood high and stately, wrapped in a purple haze; at its foot lay fields and meadows, and then came the river, gurgling and whirling among the gray rocks.

A road, arched with maple trees, followed the river round a sharp bend where there was a red mill, a roaring dam, and a long stretch of quiet water reflecting the mountain. There it found a quaint little Dutch farmhouse,

standing in the midst of a shady, grassy lawn. There were white curtains at the cottage windows, and the wide Dutch door stood open, and in it was a little old woman peering anxiously from under her hand.

"Seems Davie's awful late," said the little old lady to herself. "Maybe," and she laughed softly, "maybe it took him longer choosin' his children than it did choosin' a grandmother. La, I'll never forget that day he drove up to the poorhouse, and I was a-settin' there on the verandy, shellin' peas for the matron! 'Mis' Wilson,' says he to me, 'I just heard this mornin' you was here, or I'd a-got here sooner. Get your things, please, and come home with me,' says Davie, as coaxin' as if my heart wasn't ready to jump out

with gladness. 'I need a grandmother to take care of me,' says Davie, — but there comes the team now!"

Sure enough, down the road trotted Rix and Dexter with the spring wagon. Jamie sat on the front seat with Uncle Davie, and Patty was glad of it, for she needed all the wide seat to bounce about in for very joy. Was all this beauty in the same world with Stubbs Home? Had these green meadows and woods any relation to its dusty backyard with its one poor tree? As for the mountains — Patty caught her breath! Just then she saw the little white farmhouse near the turn in the road.

"Oh . . . oh . . . Uncle Davie!" she hesitated over the name.

"Yes, Patty," came Uncle Davie's

cheery voice — he had just put the lines into Jamie's eager hands.

"Oh, I just wanted you to look at that dear little house!" cried Patty. "It's like a storybook house among the trees, and it has roses everywhere — and, oh, the sweet little old lady!"

Then Uncle Davie laughed a mellow chuckle that did one good to hear.

"That! Why, Patty, my child, don't you know?" Just as if she could ever have dreamed of anything half so lovely. "Why, that is your new home and your new grandmother."

"Oh — oh!" cried Patty, radiantly.

"Gee!" broke out Jamie, as he, too, caught the first glimpse of their new home. "Don't I wish mother could see that!"

There at the gate wriggled Rover,

and old Betty came mewing down the garden path; it seemed as if even the roses were nodding a welcome home.

"Run in and see your granny, Patty dear," said Uncle Davie, "and help her set the table, while Jamie and I put away the horses. We're all as hungry as hunters." Up the path ran Patty to be clasped in Granny's arms, quite as if she were a real little granddaughter home from school.

"Oh, my dear!" cried Granny. "Davie never once said a girl! He said two boys, maybe, and now I am to have a little daughter again, and so sweet and pretty! What is your name, my child?"

"Patty Church," said Patty, hiding her face in Granny's neck.

"Patty Church!" cried Granny.

"What a pretty name that is! But come, honey, lay off your hat and we'll get tea. Davie does lots of the cookin', handy as any woman and always savin' me; but now you and me will do many a thing to save him. Bless his kind heart!"

It seemed to both Patty and Jamie as if there never was such a pretty sight as that supper table. Uncle Davie had hustled in and gotten himself into a big green gingham apron that buttoned down in front, and then such flying around, such sputtering of fragrant ham, such delicious odor of coffee, such boiling of potatoes that burst their brown jackets to show their white waistcoats! And there was a pat of golden butter, and biscuits, and there were crisp cucumbers, and scarlet

radishes, there were glasses of rich milk, and big round cookies, and heaped up dishes of fragrant wild strawberries; the cream for them was so thick that Granny had to dip it with a spoon. And this was all set out on a snowy cloth, in pretty dishes edged with green bands, and a great bowl of roses stood in the center of the table.

Oh, that low-ceiled dining-room with its windows that looked out upon the mountain and the river! Did it ever hold such gladness, such thankfulness as when Uncle Davie bent his head and said, as if the dear Lord were right in the room: "Father, make us a happy little family. Let us love each other and be kind. Make us good, and full of cheer — Granny, and Patty, and Jamie, and me. Amen!"

"Oh!" said Patty, looking at Uncle Davie and smiling through tears. "I just wish every little orphan girl and boy in this world could find an Uncle Davie!"

"An' every lonely old woman!" added Granny, as she poured the coffee.

"Gee!" said Jamie, "I wish mother could see me!" That was all he could say just then, for Uncle Davie had heaped his plate, and Jamie was hungry, but it wasn't long until his merry tongue was loosened.

Now Uncle Davie, being a bachelor, and knowing no better, hadn't the least idea that boys and girls should be seen and not heard — as you would have known if you had seen the interest he took in Jamie's football and

baseball stories, and how mother said this, and mother said that. Why, it seemed as if Uncle Davie liked to hear everything. And Granny's gentle little ripple of a laugh filled every pause.

"Ain't it good to hear them talk, Davie?" asked Granny, pouring the thick cream generously over the dishes of strawberries. "My, I feel twenty years younger, Davie, and you — you look like a boy to-night, with your eyes a-shinin' so."

"Boy? Not much!" laughed Uncle Davie. "I'm the uncle of this family — dignified and proper — and to-morrow my nephew, Jamie, is going to help me plow corn, and my little niece, Patty, is going to wash the dishes, and let Granny teach her to make biscuits."

"Oh, we'll love it — won't we, Jamie?" cried Patty.

"Of course," said Jamie, "and after we get the corn plowed, Uncle Davie, let's go fishing."

"That's just what I was thinking," laughed Uncle Davie. "And Granny and Patty may bring our supper down to the river and we'll have a picnic."

"Oh, goody," cried Patty. "I never was at a picnic in my whole life. Don't I wish Lina were here!" Then for the first time Uncle Davie's face grew sober and he said to Granny,

"Lina is the little girl Miss Gill chose."

"Mattie Gill! Oh, tut, tut!" and Granny, too, grew grave.

"Lina is so pretty," and Patty's tone was so wistful that Uncle Davie turned

to her at once. "She's got long brown curls, and the pinkest cheeks! Miss Pettigrew always said a rich lady would snatch her up first thing, but, oh," Patty fairly sparkled, "I tell you I'm glad nobody chose me, or I might have missed being Uncle Davie's little girl!"

That night, as Uncle Davie was locking the door in the dark hall, suddenly two slim little hands seized his arm and a little voice whispered:

"Oh, Uncle Davie, I told Granny my name was Patty Church, and — and it isn't. I was just found on a church step."

"My dear," said Uncle Davie, and he held her close, "that was a beautiful place to be found!"

CHAPTER IV

Happy Days

Next morning, when Patty opened her sleepy eyes, she thought she was still in a beautiful dream. She had been awakened by a vireo singing in the maple, instead of the noisy clanging of the bell that had waked her all her life. It was a quaint little room in which Patty found herself, bare and plain, but to Patty, after the long dormitory with its fifty white iron beds, this was so sweet that she just threw it a kiss, and stretched out both arms to it.

"You blessed little room!" she

whispered. "I'll just love you forever-more!"

When she hurried downstairs, she found Jamie coming in with a great bowl of wild strawberries that he had gathered in the meadow with the dew still upon them.

"Hello, Patty!" he whispered. "This is the dandiest place you ever saw! Talk about your parks! Well, I'll take daisy meadows and trout streams for mine! It's awfully early. Granny and Uncle Davie aren't up yet."

"Let's set the table," whispered back Patty, "and clean the berries, and, oh, we'll get daisies and butter-cups for the bowl, and surprise Granny!"

"Heigho ho!" cried Uncle Davie,

as he appeared at the open door half an hour later. "Early birds I have caught, as I live! And how did you sleep, my robins?"

"Oh, Uncle Davie, I just *love* my little room," began Patty.

"Just you wait, my dear!" chuckled Uncle Davie. "I've been writing a letter. See what happens — well, let me see — next Thursday afternoon!"

"Oh, oh!" and Patty skipped clear around the table, "a surprise! Isn't that lovely!"

But as for that, every hour and every moment was a lovely surprise at Uncle Davie's house. Jamie came in at noon as proud as a peacock, because Uncle Davie had said that he was going to be able to plow a straight furrow; and Uncle Davie was going to

teach him French and Latin and all sorts of things; for Uncle Davie had gone to college and Jamie intended to go, too, some day.

Just then Uncle Davie caught a wistful look in Patty's eyes, though that minute she was taking a pan of biscuits out of the oven — biscuits she had baked all herself under Granny's direction.

"Always two in every class, Jamie boy," said Uncle Davie, buttoning on his green apron. "You shall learn to bake biscuits; I'm mighty proud of mine, — and see! Patty's are beautiful. Well done, little girl! Patty shall study Latin right along with you, Jamie, and anything else I can teach her. We'll set up a school in the parlor this winter. There's a big fire-

place in there and we will study and read together in the evening."

"Davie," said Granny, wistfully, "don't you remember you said you'd let me teach you to knit, so when you get to be an old man you can use the 'pricks' like a Scotchman?"

"So I did, Granny," laughed Uncle Davie, "and next winter you shall teach us all to knit."

"My! I just wish Lina could come to our school," said Patty, and again Uncle Davie and Granny looked anxious.

There was plenty of work at Uncle Davie's; but it really seemed such beautiful work! Perhaps it was Uncle Davie's spirit, for he shared even the humblest task and seemed to glory in it. Then there were lessons, but

the wonderful things Uncle Davie told them didn't seem like lessons. He brought out his microscope; showed them the bees and blossoms; and taught them the bird-songs. He told them beautiful stories of heroic deeds; he read poetry to them. He gave Jamie a thin little book and said to him, "Take a dip in this at the end of a furrow," and plowing time grew golden, for the small book was "The Man Without a Country." He said to Patty: "Here, dear, when you are tired, run out to the hammock and read a page or so of this." The book was "Alice in Wonderland."

"Oh, Jamie!" said Patty, at the end of the third day, "do pinch me and see if I'm awake!"

"Gee, Patty!" Jamie's eyes grew

dim, "if mother could only see! I've written her all about it, but it does seem as if you couldn't believe anyone was as dandy as Uncle Davie, unless you really knew him."

"He's grand," declared Patty, "and Granny is just *sweet!* It scares me now to think what if somebody else had chosen us and we had missed all this. I'm so glad, Jamie, I was taken with you, for I think you make a splendid brother."

"Well, you are not bad for a girl, Patty!" Jamie laughed back at her. "Uncle Davie says he is going to teach us both to shoot and fish and swim right away!"

Thursday afternoon Patty and Granny were sitting on the front porch, mending and chatting away like

two happy wrens, when a wagon drove up and the driver called out,

"Is Mr. Marshall at home? Here is the stuff he ordered."

"It's the surprise! It's the surprise, Jamie!" sang Patty, hippity-hopping out to the barn for Uncle Davie. And right then began a most beautiful time!

"This is the new wall-paper for my niece's room." Apple-blossoms and daisies and dear little forget-me-nots flashed out at Patty from the roll he held out to her; but Jamie caught the roll just in time, for two slim arms were flung about Uncle Davie's neck.

"Wait, wait," chuckled Uncle Davie. "Dear little girl, just wait! One white bed is for your room, Patty,

and one is for Jamie. Patty is to have my mother's mahogany dressing-table, and Jamie shall have the chest of drawers. Here are white curtains for the windows, and rugs for the floors. Here is a box of books to be divided between you, and I shall make you each a set of book-shelves. I want you each to have a pleasant place of your own, where you can be alone, to study, and think, and read. That is the way to grow brave and wise — to be quite alone with one's own heart sometimes. This light rifle is for you, Jamie, but we will teach Patty to shoot at a mark. Here are jointed fishing-rods, one for each. This little work-basket, with its thimble and scissors, is for a little girl I know. The bat and ball are for my boy."

There was a box of clothing for Jamie, and it contained clothes for everyday and for Sunday. In another box were three frocks for Patty, a pink and a blue gingham, and a pretty white lawn, also a leghorn hat with a wreath that Patty said just matched her wall-paper. And for Granny there was black silk for a gown and a black bonnet with a bunch of violets on it.

"Oh, Davie, Davie!" cried Granny, the tears running down her happy old cheeks, "my dear, you — you couldn't afford it!"

"Tut, tut," said Uncle Davie, giving her a merry kiss, "not afford it! Why, I've just come into a legacy. I've inherited a grandmother, a niece, and a nephew, all in one month. I'm

a rich man! Don't worry, Granny dear, it's all right!"

On Sunday Uncle Davie hitched up Rix and Dexter and took them all to church. Jamie was in his new suit, Patty in her white dress and her apple-blossom hat, and Granny wore her bonnet with the violets, even if her new dress wasn't made yet.

"But we mustn't be too proud, dear child," said Granny, as Patty tied her bonnet strings under her chin.

"No'm, I'll try not," promised Patty, "but I do hope Lina will be there to see."

CHAPTER V

The Hawk Hunt

To Patty it seemed as if the happy days at Uncle Davie's house simply tumbled over each other, because they hurried on so.

And Jamie sent fat letters across the sea filled with good news:

"Uncle Davie is the best ever, Mother," he wrote. "He says I have a good eye — I'm not bragging; he said I was to tell you. I can plow almost as straight a furrow as he can, and I can hit the bull's eye at fifty yards with my new rifle, nine times in ten; and last night I made bully pancakes for supper. Patty can shoot first rate,

for a girl, and she's great at fishing. Every evening Uncle Davie teaches us out on the front porch. I've gained five pounds, and Patty ten — you'd hardly know her! — and we've only been here eight weeks.

"If you were only here, it would be great! But you can be sure of one thing, they don't make them any better than Uncle Davie, and Granny, and our Patty. Uncle Davie says we are both to go to college when we know all *he* can teach us, but I guess that will take some time!"

And after reading that letter, you can imagine how Jamie's mother laughed, and cried, and kissed that boyish scrawl. Her boy was safe and happy, and her heart sang with thankfulness.

Yet, of course, no place is perfect, and no lot without trouble; and the trouble at Uncle Davie's began out in the chicken yard. Patty found it when she went out with a big panful of wet corn meal for the little chicks.

"Chickie-chick! Chickie-chick!" she called as she opened the wire-netting door and let herself into the chicken yard. To her scuttled the whole flock, and yet at the first glance Patty saw that Blackie, the tamest, fattest old hen of all, was missing, and, call as she would, Blackie came no more.

"It's them plaguey chicken hawks," said Granny when Patty went flying in to tell of Blackie's disappearance. "We'll have to get Davie after them."

But that very afternoon there was a dreadful squawking out in the chicken

yard, and when Patty got there poor little Doctor Dandy, her own pet bantam, was gone, and a great hawk was slowly circling off toward the mountain. Then Patty, for the first time since she had been with Uncle Davie, wept bitterly.

Of course Uncle Davie did his best to comfort her, and promised to bring her a pair of pigeons from town that very day, and then added, to Jamie's joy:

"I guess, laddie, you'd better take your rifle and go up into the woods and see if you can't get that hawk; we can't spare any more chickens, for Patty's heart will be broken. I'd go myself, but I must go to town on business. I think you'll find the hawks up near the old quarry house.

A pair nested there last year and they are apt to come back each year."

So off Jamie started with his rifle over his shoulder. Granny had tucked a little lunch in his jacket pocket, for she said he'd be sure to get hungry tramping, and she and Patty waved him good-by from the back door.

Jamie loved the mountain trail. Up it went, over high rocks and ledges, on up among chestnuts, oaks, hickories, hemlocks, and beeches.

"Gee!" said Jamie, drawing a long breath as he looked down the valley to where the white farmhouses nestled, to where the gleaming river wound among the meadows, away, away, to where other mountains lost themselves in blue haze, "and to think two months ago I didn't know there was

such a spot, nor an Uncle Davie in the whole world!"

But the shrill cry of "*kee-you, kee-you,*" and a great flapping of wings just then reminded Jamie of the rifle on his shoulder. The hawks — there were two of them — had seen him if he hadn't seen the hawks, and now far, now near, in great circles, they went and came with their shrill cry.

It wasn't so very far now to the old quarry house. Jamie could see it, a weather-beaten shack built on high corner posts that made it look as if it stood on stilts, down in the shallow pool that covered part of the old quarry. The front door opened on what Uncle Davie called "Joe Cole's Flat," where the mossy wood road trailed past.

Up around the quarry side climbed Jamie; away circled a hawk with its wheezy call, "*kee-you!*" — a long sweep down toward the brush! — "*kee-you!*" — up and gone again, and a long wait — "*kee-you!*" — and just then Jamie saw, quite a distance off among the tall bushes, a fleck of red-brown among the leaves — it moved!

Jamie sighted and blazed away, and then there rang out through the wood a terrible cry. Jamie, so happy a moment before, stood there stock-still, staring at that bit of brown that had pitched forward heavily; the hawks wheeled away unnoticed — never again in his life did he hear that weird "*kee-you*" without a quickened breath, — and then he knew that he must see what lay there among the bushes.

A little girl lay there! A little girl no older than Patty! She lay stretched out behind the bushes as if she had fallen where she had hidden. The red-brown patch, so like in color to the shoulder of the hawk, at which Jamie had fired, was her straw hat. Her torn and faded dress was green, nearly the color of the bushes. She was very white, as she lay there, and very thin, and her long lashes looked black against her wan cheeks. Her hair was cut short, and her feet were bare, and scratched and bleeding from the briars. But nowhere did Jamie see the thing he had so dreaded — a stain of red! The little girl might have been sleeping, but as he knelt there beside her she gave a little cry and slowly opened her eyes.

"'Where did I hit you?' he begged."

CHAPTER VI

At the Quarry

"Oh — oh!" gasped the little girl, looking up at Jamie in terror. "Oh, please don't hurt me!"

Jamie, kneeling there, was not a bit ashamed of the tears that ran down his cheeks. He was thinking of nothing but that she was alive, that she had opened her eyes and spoken.

"Where — did I hit you?" he begged. "Your dress was just the color of the bushes, — I saw your hat and I thought it was the hawk! Oh, *where* did I shoot you?"

"Shoot me!" and the brown eyes

grew less terror-stricken. Who could be afraid of poor Jamie, kneeling there so humbly? "I — I don't know! I had slept in that little house all night — and I was so weak — and afraid, I just stayed there until I heard somebody climbing up the quarry, and I thought they had come after me, but I found I couldn't run for my feet hurt me so, and all I could do was to creep back here and hide. I shut my eyes, I guess, for I couldn't bear to see who you were — it might have been *her* — and just then I heard an awful noise, and something sort of zipped, and I guess I must have fainted."

"Oh," cried Jamie, "and there is a hole through your hat! Oh, I *did* almost kill you! It was my rifle you heard and the zip was my bullet!"

But the little girl did not seem to hear, for she suddenly moaned,

"Oh, I am so hungry and so thirsty! I just can't go any farther!"

Then wasn't Jamie thankful for the lunch Granny had put in his jacket pocket! He lifted up the little girl, and set her with her back against a rock in the shade of a big pine. Then he opened his lunch and spread it out before her, and was off like a flash to the spring that trickled in the quarry, to bring her a drink in the old tin cup that he found there. Then Jamie brought her his handkerchief, wet at the spring, and, by and by, when she had bathed her face, and pushed back the elf-locks, she began to have a strangely familiar look.

"Why, you are Lina!" cried Jamie. "You are Lina from Stubbs Home!"

To Jamie's astonishment, weak as she was, she sprang to her feet. She tried to run, but stumbled and fell, and bursting into tears, she sobbed out,

"Oh, please don't take me back!"

"Back to Stubbs Home?" asked perplexed Jamie. "Why, of course I won't."

"No, *no!* Don't take me back to Miss Gill," sobbed Lina. "I — I ran away! I had to work all day long, and I had to sleep up in the attic, and I was so afraid, for there were mice up there! And she took away my white dress and my new hat, and gave them to her niece! Oh, I did try so hard to please her, but I just couldn't! I had so little to eat, and I got so hungry and I took an apple — it was under a tree — I didn't know

she would care, but she saw me, and she whipped me, and said I was a *thief* and that she was going to write to Doctor Stubbs and to Miss Pettigrew and tell them; and when I said then they would take me away she said she had adopted me and I'd *have* to stay with her forever and ever. She cut off my curls, for she said I'd have no time to comb them after that, as she always kept thieves busy! Then she locked me in the carriage house, but I got out and ran away, and I've been gone three days. And I'm *never* going back, not if I die!"

Jamie thought of Patty down at Uncle Davie's. He thought of his own happy lot, and never in his life had he been so sorry for anyone as he was for Lina.

"I don't believe she has adopted you, Lina," said Jamie, after a pause in which Lina had stilled her sobbing. "I don't think anyone can, until they have had one of us three months. I'm sure I heard Captain Kenneth tell my mother so."

"Us!" cried Lina in astonishment. "You aren't a Stubbs Home boy! I never saw you before!"

"Yes, you did!" said Jamie. "Don't you remember Captain Ken brought another boy along, who hadn't been at Stubbs Home? I am Jamie Hall, and Mr. David Marshall took me, and he took Patty, too."

"Patty!" cried Lina. "I loved Patty best of any of the girls," and again Lina was sobbing.

"Listen, Lina," begged Jamie, "and

please don't cry. I'll go down and get Patty and she'll tell us what to do."

"Oh, I'm *so* afraid to stay alone! You don't think Miss Gill will find me while you are gone, do you?"

Jamie thought a minute. He knew that by this time the Gill woman would be much frightened over the disappearance of Lina. She would be frightened, too, for the sake of her own name and reputation in the neighborhood, especially as Doctor Stubbs did not give up the children entirely until after a three months' trial. Miss Gill must be searching for her, and it seemed to Jamie as if the very first place she would look would be the old quarry house. He was really afraid to leave Lina alone there, and yet he

must get Patty to help plan, since Uncle Davie was not at home.

When Jamie explained to Lina the danger of the quarry house as a hiding-place, she hobbled painfully with him to the quarry wall, and then crept down over the rocks to the ledge below, where Jamie knew of a great hollow oak whose roots ran far out into the pool.

"There you are!" said Jamie cheerily, when he had gotten her settled comfortably in the oak, "as snug as a bug in a rug, and now I'll run down and get Patty. It will take quite a while, you know, but you mustn't get worried and you mustn't cry. Maybe you can sleep a bit."

Everything ready, he bade her good-

by, and with his rifle once more over his shoulder he hurried down the trail.

. . . . . .

Patty had baked a cake that morning, a wonderful great cake, rich, spicy, and delicious. It stood upon the pantry shelf, with a little one baked from the left-over dough. And there were two cherry pies, and a saucer pie for Jamie, and a pan of buns.

Then Patty, dressed in her new blue gingham, with her long braid tied with a big blue bow, sat in the hammock reading "Alice in Wonderland," and was blissfully happy.

"Patty, Patty!" surely someone was calling her, "Patty!" It was Jamie's voice.

"What's the matter, Jamie? What's

the matter?" cried Patty as Jamie came running toward her.

"Oh, Patty, we've got to hurry back or they might find her, and after I 'most killed her —" panted Jamie.

"Almost killed the hawk?" gasped Patty. "Oh, Jamie, what *is* the matter?"

"No, no! Wait till I get my breath and I'll tell you." Then excited Jamie tried to begin at the beginning, but by the time he was half through Patty was on her feet, her eyes flashing one minute, the next, bright with tears.

"Poor Lina! Oh, oh, Jamie, let's run and tell Granny!"

"But, Patty," objected Jamie, "it will only worry Granny! She can't help. It is you Lina wants!"

Already Patty was halfway to the house. Granny was sitting asleep in her chair, and Patty only stopped to give a butterfly kiss to the very top bow of her cap. Then she flew into the pantry, took down a basket, put into it the little marble cake, the saucer pie, and some thick slices of bread and butter. Then up she ran to her room for her best pair of shoes and stockings, and she was ready. But back again she flew to write a bit of a note:

"DEAR GRANNY:

I've gone up the mountain with Jamie, and I took the little cake and pie. Don't worry, I'll be back soon. PATTY."

This note she pinned to the corner of the table cover, right where Granny would see it the minute she opened

her eyes. Then at last out she ran to Jamie.

"What are we going to do?" begged Jamie, when he saw her coming. "Lina said you would know."

"Don't stop to worry, we haven't time," said Patty, giving him the basket. "Now let us hurry and I'll explain as we go."

CHAPTER VII

In the Hollow Tree

When Jamie and Patty reached the quarry, they found Lina fast asleep in the hollow tree.

How Patty kissed and cried over her pale, thin face, and her cropped curls! Lina was too happy at finding herself safe in Patty's arms to spend any more time in tears; and when she had told her story all over to Patty, and been petted and soothed and comforted, she began to feel some hope of the future, and at last consented to go home with Jamie and Patty, and tell Uncle Davie and Granny all her troubles.

But when Patty had gotten her into shoes and stockings, they found to their dismay that Lina was far too weak and stiff even to climb out of the quarry, let alone go down the rough trail.

"Well, there is just nothing to do," declared Jamie, when Lina sank back, white and faint, "but to go and get Uncle Davie to come and carry her down."

"Yes, Jamie, but Uncle Davie won't be back until after ten o'clock to-night," said Patty.

"Oh, Patty," wailed Lina, clinging to Patty's hand, "you won't leave me! I can't stay up here alone! Oh, don't leave me, Patty!"

It would have taken a much harder heart than Patty's to have refused Lina

anything just then, and so it was settled that Jamie should go down and tell Granny and wait for Uncle Davie to come home, while Patty should stay with Lina.

"Now, Lina," said Patty, when Jamie had disappeared down the trail, "we'll sit out here on the big rock, and if we hear anybody coming you can fly into the tree again, but we are not going to cry any more, and we are not going to worry, but we *are* going to have a perfectly beautiful time talking till blessed Uncle Davie comes and gets us."

"Oh, tell me all about Uncle Davie and Granny, Patty, do!" begged Lina, and so Patty told and told, just as if the sweetness would never get all poured out, and when she had finished,

Lina's eyes were like stars, just hearing about it. "Oh, Patty," she faltered, "I don't expect Uncle Davie *could* take another little girl — not when he's got Granny and Jamie, too. Miss Gill says it costs a lot to take folks in!"

"I — I know he'll never let Miss Gill have you again," said Patty slowly, but there was a queer pain in her heart, a sort of fear — a fear of herself. "Not take another little girl!" She wished Lina had not said it.

All in a minute Patty saw Lina hurrying around helping Granny; Lina swinging in the hammock reading "Alice in Wonderland"; Lina in her little room — her dear, dear little room! Lina feeding the chickens; fishing with Jamie; Lina with Uncle

Davie! "Not another little girl" — no! there was room for only one. And then she looked at Lina's wan face and thin hands.

"Listen!" whispered Lina suddenly; then as fast as her poor stiff feet could carry her, she had crept away toward the hollow tree. "Come quick, Patty, come quick!" she begged.

Patty's own quick ears had heard the sound of voices on the flat above — a low steady murmur, broken now and then by a shrill voice.

"Come, Patty, come!" pleaded Lina, cowering down in the hollow tree.

But Patty was whispering:

"There isn't room for us both in there, Lina dear, and besides I haven't time now, but just you keep as still as a mouse."

As Miss Gill and her sister, warm, tired, and very much troubled, came out into the open wood road before the old quarry house, the first thing they saw was Patty sitting quietly on the big rock in the quarry below, her hands clasped about her knees, her eyes fixed upon the far hazy mountains across the valley.

"It's her!" cried Mrs. Hicks.

"No, it ain't!" panted Miss Gill. "But I'll bet she knows where she is! Hi, little girl, hi there!" she called, "did you see anything of a runaway girl in a green dress and a brown hat?"

"What did you say?" asked Patty to give herself time, for her heart was going like a trip-hammer, but she *must* be brave and wise for Lina's sake.

"Did you see anything of a little girl that had run away from home?" asked Mrs. Hicks blandly.

"A little girl?" asked Patty, turning again to look at the mountain. "Was she your little girl?"

"I don't see what's that to you," blustered Miss Gill, "but anyway she's run off, and got me into a peck of trouble."

"Hush, Matty, hush!" ordered her sister under her breath. "Say, little girl, did you see anything of her? You see it is very important we should find Lina and —"

"Lina!" broke in Patty eagerly. "Do you mean the little girl with long curls and very pink cheeks that Captain Kenneth brought here from Stubbs Home? She — was Miss

Pettigrew's favorite, and Doctor Stubbs would be awfully mad if anything happened to Lina! Why — why, she couldn't have been your little girl, for I came with Captain Kenneth, too, and Mr. David Marshall took me, and he can't adopt me for three months after he has *proved* that he has been very good to me. But Uncle Davie is good! Oh, he has been perfectly lovely!"

At the very first mention of Stubbs Home Miss Gill turned pale; but when Patty spoke of David Marshall she could hide her dismay no longer.

"My mercy!" she gasped.

"You have done it, Matty Gill!" cried her sister. "What did I say? Get David Marshall on your track for abusing a child and you are in for it!"

Miss Gill stayed to hear no more but turned and ran back along the wood road, her scolding sister hurrying after.

CHAPTER VIII

Patty's Decision

"It's just beautiful up here, isn't it?" asked Patty, smoothing back Lina's soft locks. Patty had made Lina comfortable on the big rock by the hollow tree. Night had come, and the soft wind was whispering through the great trees about them. Below lay the valley dimly seen by the faint new moon, and wherever a farmhouse nestled, a little star of light shone from the window, but to Patty one star was a planet — the star of home.

"It's pretty, but it's awfully lonely, Patty," sighed Lina. "You aren't scared, are you?"

"I'm not now," laughed Patty.

"But when I was talking to Miss Gill I expect you could have heard my heart beat if you had listened."

"You didn't seem scared a bit, Patty. Oh, Patty, I will never forget it as long as I live, and I just love you!"

"There, there!" crooned Patty. "Now don't you cry any more. Oh, Lina, there comes Uncle Davie and Jamie! I saw a weeny-teeny light, just that minute, swinging down our lane. It's Uncle Davie's lantern, as sure as anything!"

There came that golden gleam up and up the trail, sometimes hidden, but only to brighten when it appeared again, and then, at last — oh, happy sound — there was Uncle Davie's hearty,

"Ho, my little lassies! ho! Where are you?"

Then up they climbed, Uncle Davie and Jamie.

But Uncle Davie looked grave enough when he saw Lina's wan face, and his brown eyes flashed with something very different from their usual merry twinkle when Patty told him of Miss Gill's coming.

"Gee, Patty, you're all right!" cried Jamie. "Isn't she brave — for a girl, Uncle Davie?"

"Yes, our Patty has a brave heart and a quick wit, and it's very proud of her her old uncle is this night," said Uncle Davie, as he knotted the blanket he had brought into a sort of hammock. "We won't have any more trouble with Miss Gill, I'm sure. She will be

too glad if we only hold our tongues. Now, little lady, if you will kindly take your seat in your sedan chair, we'll trot down the hill to Granny."

"Dear me, dear me!" called Granny. She stood in the open doorway, the cheery kitchen alight behind her, as they came in the barnyard gate. "I heard my children coming away up the mountainside. Have you got the little girl all right, Davie? I've got a nice bath ready for her in the spare room and some of Patty's things laid out, and we'll give her her supper and put her to bed, poor darlin'."

"Bless the child!" cried Granny, when Uncle Davie had unslung the hammock and set Lina down in the big rocking-chair. "Her eyes are like

moons in her bit of a face! And such a way to cut hair! Never mind, dearie, Granny knows how to shingle hair, and we'll have a crop of short curls on that head, and some flesh on those bones, and some color in those cheeks, before the month is out! You'll see!"

Then away bustled everybody to make their little guest comfortable, and it wasn't very long before Lina, sweet and clean and happy, in one of Patty's new nightdresses, was tucked away in the big spare bed.

"Good night, little daughter," said Granny, with a last kiss, "say your prayers and go to sleep. Happy days are comin' soon."

"Good night, Lina!" said Patty.

"Good night, Patty dear!" and

Lina pulled her down to whisper, "Oh, Patty, it's a hundred thousand times nicer than you said! Oh, do you think Uncle Davie *could* keep another little girl?"

"I think he'll keep you," faltered Patty, "I'm going to ask him!"

Patty stopped on the back stairs, to wipe away the tears that would come. "You are a great big cry baby," she whispered angrily to herself. "Haven't you had this beautiful time to remember? Now you go down and be happy or — or I'll shake you — do you hear?" and with that she opened the stair door and sprang into the kitchen with a gay: "Oh, aren't you 'most starved, Uncle Davie?"

"Run, Patty dear, and get your surprise," said Granny. "I've made a

place for it right here in the middle of the table."

"Well — well — well!" gasped Uncle Davie, when Patty came proudly in, bearing the great cake on its high glass stand and stood it in the middle of the table, "Well, that *is* a cake! And did my little girl make that?"

"Three cheers for the cake baker!" cried Jamie, capering about the table.

"Don't be so good to me!" burst out Patty. "Don't make me so happy, or my heart will break!"

"Eh?" cried Granny, "eh? My dearie, as if anybody could be too good to our Patty!"

"Our Patty has been over-wrought to-day," said Uncle Davie, brushing the flying hair from Patty's face, and tipping it back that he might look into

the misty eyes. "Tears and laughter — our little April girl! You're tired, dear, and you need your supper. Cut the beautiful cake, lady-bird, and don't cry."

"Now, something is up with our Patty," said Jamie to himself as he tumbled into bed, "I wonder what it is!"

CHAPTER IX

Up in the Attic

The next day Lina wasn't able to lift her weary little head. Indeed, it was a whole week before Uncle Davie carried her down to the hammock under the big maple tree, and before the doctor's old buggy went jogging past instead of stopping at the little Dutch farmhouse.

Uncle Davie had sent Jamie over to Miss Gill with a note, telling her that Lina was ill, but safe under his roof, and that all he asked was that she should never take another child into her home.

Even after Lina was up, poor child,

she seemed weak and listless, and, indeed, as Granny told Uncle Davie, Lina was never going to take the interest in the housework that Patty did.

"'Taint in her, Davie, so you can't expect it. She sings like a bird. Never did I hear a sweeter voice! And pretty! Why, she gets more like a little rose every day. But Patty now — our Patty — she's pretty in another way, just sort of ripples like the river, our Patty does; an' learn! And sweet — and good!"

Then Uncle Davie laughed, and told her she was a ridiculous granny, that all her geese were swans; he supposed that Jamie, now —

"Oh, our Jamie!" broke in Granny, not letting him finish, "never was a

dearer or a nicer boy than our Jamie! He is goin' to be a doctor. Jamie and I settled that the other day while he was waterin' the doctor's horse. Says I, 'Jamie, you'll be a doctor.' Says Jamie, 'I will, and I'll tell mother the next time I write.'"

Of course, helping Granny, being with Lina, studying with Uncle Davie, and trotting around with Jamie, Patty hadn't had time to worry, though every day the time for Captain Kenneth's return to take back the unwanted children came nearer.

Lina seemed to take it for granted, since Patty had promised to ask Uncle Davie, that she was to stay right on; but, so far, Patty had never been able to get up her courage to say what she meant to say to Uncle Davie.

Uncle Davie had been very busy with the carpenter, making another room off the big attic; and then one rainy day, he, with Jamie to help, had moved all the furniture from his own room into it. Patty had been helping, too, carrying up Uncle Davie's books, his pictures, and his old violin.

Everything was settled in Uncle Davie's new room by three o'clock that afternoon. It was a charming room, they all agreed, with its dormer windows looking toward the mountain.

"But we mustn't sit here idle," cried Uncle Davie springing up. "Here, Jamie, help me carry down this long board, please. Granny and Lina are making paste for me and we'll slap on this new wall paper in a joyous jiffy. Do you think she'll like it, Patty?"

And again Uncle Davie held up a roll of dainty paper for Patty and Jamie to see. This time there were wreaths of pink roses caught with little green vines.

"Oh, oh, it's lovely!" gasped Patty. "Who do you *want* to like it?"

"Why, Lina, of course," said Uncle Davie, looking at Patty in astonishment, for she had grown very white and had sat down suddenly in his big chair. "Why, my little girl! I couldn't let Lina go back. You wouldn't want me to do that?"

"No — no — *no!*" burst out Patty. "But I thought you could give her my room."

"Your little room that you love so much?" Uncle Davie looked more perplexed than ever.

"So that is what has been the matter, Patty!" broke in Jamie.

"Well, I may be stupid, sonny," laughed Uncle Davie, "but bless me if I can see what is the matter with either of you!"

"Oh, Uncle Davie," cried Patty, running to throw her arms about him, "Jamie and I cost a lot and I didn't see how you could take anybody else. But when I saw how ill Lina was, and how she dreaded going back — it 'most broke my heart, so I was going to ask you to send me back with Captain Ken, so that Lina could stay with you. Oh, you don't think it was because I didn't love my home, and you, and Granny, and Jamie? Oh, I *couldn't* love you all any more, but I'm strong and well, and I

would have had this happy time to remember!"

"Listen to her, Jamie!" chuckled Uncle Davie, holding her very close. "Just think of us giving up our Patty! Never to see her laughing and crying all in a minute! Never to see her helpful little hands making everybody comfortable and glad! Never to hear her willing feet flying about on joyful, unselfish errands! Never to feel these loving, grateful little arms about us any more! Never to look into this laughing, pretty — yes, Patty — this pretty little face again! Jamie, what do you think Granny would say if I sent our Patty back?"

"Patty dear, where are you, little daughter?" came Granny's quavering call up the attic stairs.

"Coming, Granny dear!" and Patty, all tears and smiles, flew away toward the stairs, but once there she turned, and looking back said breathlessly:

"I never, never dreamed you all loved me that way, Uncle Davie! I wouldn't have dared dream such a beautiful thing. But now that I do know it, you'll *never* get rid of me! I'm so glad you are going to keep Lina — but — oh, I'm *so* glad it seems as if I'd die — that you're going to keep me, too! I just love to hear you say 'our Patty'!"

"The very idea of the child's thinking I'd send her back," mused Uncle Davie. "Why, lad, I'd just as soon think of sending you back!"

At that Jamie grinned but his eyes

grew misty. "Gee, Uncle Davie," he said, as he gathered up the rolls of paper, "I just wish mother knew you and Granny!"

CHAPTER X

A Visitor

Everything was going beautifully at Uncle Davie's house. Now that Lina was quite well again, and settled in her own pretty room, with her own place in everyone's heart, life flowed on, with duty and pleasure, study and fun, mixed in just the way that Uncle Davie believed best.

And all the time, September twelfth, the day of Captain Kenneth's return, drew nearer. Uncle Davie had written and invited him to the farmhouse, much to Patty's and Lina's delight. As the adoption papers for the children

he had brought were to be made out, he would need to be there several days, and Patty and Lina had a beautiful time getting the spare room ready, filling the pantry with good things, and the house with flowers, for they wanted dear Captain Ken to see their new home at its very best.

But upon that fateful day, when Uncle Davie, who had gone to town with the spring wagon to meet their guest, drove up to the front gate, it was not Captain Ken who sat beside him.

"Oh, mercy me!" gasped Patty.

"Oh, goodness!" whispered Lina.

"Who ever is it?" asked Granny anxiously. They were all out on the front porch.

"Sh! sh!" said Patty. "It's Doctor

Stubbs, Granny, and I never knew of his leaving Stubbs Home before!"

But if Patty was surprised to see him, she was still more surprised at his greeting. If she had been his long lost little daughter, he couldn't have been more delighted to see her, nor have spoken to her more tenderly. "My dear child!" he said, holding her slim little hand very close, "Miss Pettigrew sends you her love and longs to see you." But Lina — why, Doctor Stubbs scarcely seemed to see her at all!

An hour later, Patty was standing at the kitchen sink paring potatoes for dinner, when a voice at the window said,

"That is unpleasant work for those pretty hands, my child, but all that

will soon be changed." And there, just outside the window, stood Doctor Stubbs looking in at her, his beard wagging on his chin in the way that had always made her want to laugh, but the look in his eyes had never been fatherly and kind in those days as it was now.

"Oh," said Patty, feeling so secure and happy as Uncle Davie's little girl — for wasn't she to be adopted that very day to be Patty Marshall all the rest of her life? — "Oh, I just love paring potatoes, when they are pinky-brown like these."

"Directly after dinner I must go to town," said the Doctor, "but this evening I want to have a long talk with you. I have some astonishing — some wonderful news for you, Patty!"

But just then he turned away, as Uncle Davie was coming up the walk, and the minute Patty saw him she knew that he was much troubled.

"Patty," he said, "Jamie will take Doctor Stubbs to town right after dinner, and then I want you to come to me in the parlor as I have something to tell you."

Patty loved the comfortable and cozy old parlor, and she loved, too, being alone there with Uncle Davie to talk over important things. So far, she hadn't worried a bit. Whatever was wrong Uncle Davie would make right — of that she was sure.

"Patty," said Uncle Davie, when she had taken her favorite seat on a little stool at his feet, "you know you told me that first night you came that

you had been left, a little baby, on the steps of a church. Well, last week Doctor Stubbs was sent for in great haste to see a dying man — and, my dear," Uncle Davie took both her hands in his, "that man was your uncle, your mother's brother."

"Oh!" gasped Patty.

"Your father and mother had married much against your grandfather's wishes," went on Uncle Davie, "indeed, he never saw your mother again, although she was his only daughter. But when she and your father died, your uncle never told your grandfather that they had left a little child, because, dear, there was a great fortune that should have been yours, and that would be his if there were no little Patty. As wicked as

he was, however, he couldn't quite give you up, and so your mother's wedding ring and your name, Patty, were put in the little bag, that there might be some clew. Nor did he ever lose sight of you. We must give him credit for that. He knew you were at Stubbs Home, and when he found himself dying — your grandfather died several years ago — he sent for Doctor Stubbs and confessed to him the whole story."

"Oh, Uncle Davie," cried Patty, "please tell me my name! And haven't I anybody left at all? Not a single soul?"

"No one, Patty! In that way you are not changed at all; but now you are Patty Irwin, and, my dear, such a very rich little girl!"

"Patty — Irwin!" said she slowly. "How funny it sounds! I don't like it nearly so well as Patty Marshall. Oh, Uncle Davie!" she cried suddenly, "please, I'd rather be your little girl! I don't feel one bit acquainted with myself! Mayn't I be Patty Marshall? Can't you adopt me just the same?"

"Now that is the trouble, dear," said Uncle Davie. "Your uncle left a will which says that you are to choose your own guardian and your own home, but once chosen you must stay with that guardian until you are of age. You see, dear, you can study and travel and have beautiful things. Oh, my child, I must make you understand, for it is a great thing you are to decide. My home is right here, Patty,

with Jamie, and Granny, and Lina, nothing can alter that. If you do as Doctor Stubbs wishes, and he becomes your guardian, you can — "

"So *that's* it!" cried Patty. "So that's the reason Doctor Stubbs was so lovely to me!"

"Listen, dear! you must not be unjust. You would not go back as an inmate of Stubbs Home. He wants you to come and be a member of his own family."

Uncle Davie faltered, for Patty's eyes were growing wider and wider.

"And you said I may choose for myself?"

"Yes, dear, no one can force you."

Then suddenly Patty flung herself into Uncle Davie's arms, laughing and crying all in a breath.

"Just as if it would take me one minute! Just as if I'd ever be anything in all this wide world but Uncle Davie's Patty!"

CHAPTER XI

Patty's Plans

Of course, it wasn't quite so easy as Patty had hoped. Doctor Stubbs was at first patient, then persistent, and then angry, as he explained the great advantages she would have in living with him, and the dreadful mistake she was making in choosing that simple country home. But at last even Doctor Stubbs was forced to give up, because Patty, leaving a little note for Uncle Davie, slipped away up the mountain.

She had a beautiful time up there, sitting on a big rock that gave her a good view of the old farmhouse below, dreaming the most wonderful dreams.

It was so charming to count on her finger-tips and say: "And that's for Uncle Davie — this for Granny — and Lina shall have this and Jamie that," and to know that her dreams could come true!

Then it was so wonderful to know to whom she had belonged, even if her father and mother should always seem unreal and shadowy, yet she loved them, and they had loved her, and she had had a name, and people, and a home like other little girls. That was such a comfort. But, most rapturous of all, now she should always be Uncle Davie's little girl, and *not* a burden, and, oh, such delightful things as she should make come true!

You can imagine what a happy girl Patty was, when at last she saw Jamie

driving off to take Doctor Stubbs to the station, and with what joy she flew down to help Granny and Lina put things to rights; and her delight to feel the dear peace of home settle down again.

That night, when they were all together, out on the little porch, Granny, and Uncle Davie, and his children, sitting there, in the quiet, looking across the singing river, across the meadow to where Overlook Mountain dreamed in the dusk — Patty could keep silent no longer.

"Oh, my dears, I had the most beautiful time up on the mountain! I planned out everything! Do you want to hear?" she asked.

"You bet we do!" cried Jamie.

"Oh, Patty, how lovely!" exclaimed

Lina, "and do you think it will all come true?"

"Dear heart!" sighed Granny, "as if dreams ever did come true! But I am sure Patty's ought to!"

"Yours shall, Patty," promised Uncle Davie, "if I can make them."

"Well, then," said Patty, "it begins like this: I'm going to study and try to learn, and be nice, and good, and do *all* you tell me! Then when I get grown up, the very minute I come into my money, I'm going to build a beautiful house over there in the meadow — a great big house with wide verandas, all sunny and bright, and filled with cheerful, pretty things."

"Why, I thought you loved this old farmhouse!" broke in Jamie. "It's good enough for me!"

"Now you listen, Jamie!" begged Patty. "The big house shall be called 'Uncle Davie's Home,' and in it shall live many, many little orphan children, and Captain Kenneth shall be manager, and Jamie's mother matron — I know she'll make a lovely mother for them — and Jamie, who'll be grown up then, shall be the doctor, and make all the sick ones well, and the lame ones walk again. Lina shall go away and study music, and get to be a great singer, and she'll come back, and sing lovely songs to the children, and tell them about when *she* was a little girl at Stubbs Home! Uncle Davie shall have books and books, and everything he wants, and he will love all the children, and talk to them, and teach them as he does us. Granny shall wear a

white dress every day, and have pink bows on her caps, and she shall have a whole hothouse full of flowers — and all the children shall think she is *sweet!* We'll have a shiny new carriage — and, oh, yes, a perfectly lovely long 'bus for the children to go riding in every fine day — and — they shall have swings — and a pony and dogs and kittens to love — and chickens — and I'll give Doctor Stubbs a gold-headed cane!"

"Hear, hear!" laughed Uncle Davie. "But I'm wondering where Patty's coming in. What are you going to do while Lina is singing, and Jamie's doctoring, Granny wearing pink bows, and I reading? Won't you be a little lonely?"

"Why, of course not," cried Patty, "for I'm going to live right here with

you and Granny. There'll be Lina coming home, and there'll be Jamie and his mother over at 'Uncle Davie's Home,' and all those children to be helped to have a good time — besides, oh Lina! — I want you to have a pink dress and a big white hat with a wreath of roses on it!"

"Oh, Patty," cried Lina, throwing her arms about her, "you are the dearest, best girl that ever lived! — and oh, I *will* study, and I *will* sing, and we'll make 'Uncle Davie's Home' the loveliest place in the world!"

"I shall have a big cooky crock, and another for ginger cakes, and see that they are never empty," mused Granny, "so all the little folks can run in to Granny when they get hungry."

"Dear, dear," chuckled Jamie, "I

tell you I'll have to make those kids stand around, with mother, and Uncle Davie, and Granny, and Patty to spoil them, and Lina busy singing. I'll be the only one left to see to the discipline."

"Mercy on us!" protested Uncle Davie, "don't build that house to-night, my dears! First, Patty said we were to be good, and study, and grow up; that will take a good deal of time."

"Yes — yes," broke in Granny, "and we ought to begin by gettin' good sleep. But that was a beautiful dream, Patty, the prettiest I ever heard, and I do wish it would come true."

The most wonderful thing about Patty's plans was that, with Uncle Davie's help, she worked them all out,

and so her dream did come true! There to-day, by the bend of the river, is still the little white farmhouse, and the old red mill, but there, too, in the grassy meadow, stands a cheerful white house, with wide verandas and sunny windows, and over the gateway one reads in gold letters:

"UNCLE DAVIE'S HOME"

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00024872622